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## House of Representatives

### STATEMENT ON H.CON.RES. 322 – HONORING THE USO

Ms. BORDALLO:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 322 to recognize the outstanding contributions of the United Service Organization (USO) to the morale and welfare of our servicemen and women in the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. I also take this occasion to commend the USO upon their 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The USO has served as a source of support, entertainment, and morale for American troops since its chartering in 1941. Established at the request of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the USO has served our nation's servicemen and women ever since. I commend the efforts of those six civilian agencies—the Salvation Army, Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, National Catholic Community Service, National Travelers Aid Association and the National Jewish Welfare Board—that came together in support of our troops in creating the USO, bringing about its official incorporation in New York on February 4, 1941.

The USO has strong ties to Guam. Burgeoning with U.S. military personnel following the liberation of the island, the USO first came to Guam in the early 1950s. Delivering entertainment and laughs to those serving on Guam, the USO's work on Guam was but a small glimpse of its work lifting the morale of servicemen

and women around the world.

The combat zones of the past included Korea, Vietnam and Kuwait. Today the USO brings entertainment to our men and women serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa among many other places. For 65 years, wherever you found America's military, you found the USO, no matter the location or the danger.

The USO not only brings entertainment, a piece of home and a smile to troops deployed abroad through its shows, but serves as a "home away from home" for servicemen and women in 124 centers around the world. I am pleased to state that this proud tradition will soon be resurrected on Guam. The USO will re-open its Guam branch on March 23, 2006. With the military presence on Guam steadily growing, the USO has once more answered the call to service. With growing unease in Asia, the strategic location of Guam is increasingly valued. The men and women who serve on the island provide stability to the region and security to our nation. The USO will once again ensure that these men and women, their families and their guests nonetheless always have the support they need. No doubt this branch will also bring to Guam many of the USO's trademark shows.

Let me take this chance to

say, on behalf of the people of Guam, welcome back to the USO. As we say on Guam, Hafa Adai and Si Yu'os Ma'ase (thank you) for their work.

Our nation enjoys a spirit of brotherhood, of service and of charity that is a reflection of a national value of selfless service. The USO embodies this national value. And the people who are the USO live this national value. Over 12,000 volunteers donate over 450,000 hours annually thereby allowing the USO to serve our nation's greatest servants. Not to be forgotten are the celebrities and entertainers that often headline USO tours, lending their time and talents to honor those people who provide them the very opportunity to live the American dream they have realized. And providing the foundation upon which the USO can operate are countless thousands of U.S. donors, both private and corporate, who make giving a centerpiece of their lives.

I join my colleagues in commending the USO and all of the men and women who over time and who now make up this great organization for the service they provide to those who serve our nation in uniform. Like our military men and women, you too are heroes. You are what makes America great. God Bless the USO, God Bless our men and women serving around the world today and God Bless America.